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Viewing cable 05CAIRO2969, EGYPT NAMES ACCOMPLICES IN APRIL 7 BAZAAR BOMBING

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cable's unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

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Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#05CAIRO2969**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
05CAIRO2969	2005-04-18 16:08	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Cairo

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2011/04/19/112444/leadership-vacuum-in-suez-illustrates.html>

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 002969

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/18/2015

TAGS: [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [EG](#)

SUBJECT: EGYPT NAMES ACCOMPLICES IN APRIL 7 BAZAAR BOMBING

REF: A. CAIRO 2898 (NOTAL)

[1](#)B. CAIRO 2799

Classified by Charge Gordon Gray for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

[1](#)1. (SBU) In a public announcement on the afternoon of April 17, the Ministry of Interior named four accomplices of the bomber who died as he carried out the April 7 terrorist attack in a Cairo tourist bazaar that killed one AmCit, two French nationals and wounded 17, including three AmCits, other foreigners, and Egyptians. Of the four accomplices named, three are in custody and one is at large. A fifth man arrested is apparently not part of the conspiracy. Meanwhile, writing in Egypt's leading daily newspaper, Sheikh Aly Gom'a, the Mufti of the Republic, described the bomber as a "cowardly terrorist...his misguided beliefs are against Islam." Imprisoned members of the terrorist Islamic Group, which was responsible for most of the terror attacks that struck Egypt in the 1990s, said the April 7 bombing was "murder not jihad" and "served the goals of the enemies of the nation." Many columnists writing about the attack have speculated that poverty, hopelessness, and the lack of legitimate political outlets contributed to the bomber's decision, and others continue to peddle conspiracy theories, while one prominent commentator warned against making excuses for terrorists. End summary.

Four Accomplices

[1](#)2. (C) On the afternoon of April 17, Egypt State TV broadcast an announcement from the Ministry of Interior (MOI) which named four accomplices of Hassan Ahmed Rif'at Bashandi, who

died April 7 as he detonated a bomb in the Khan al-Khalili tourist bazaar, killing also one AmCit and two French nationals, and wounding 17 Egyptians and foreigners.

The statement identified the following:

A. Akram Mohammed Fawzy (in custody) (DOB 11/5/1970) (DOBs were subsequently provided to LEGATT by Egyptian State Security) is described as the planner and financier of the attack. MOI alleges that Fawzy provided the principal logistical, technical, and ideological support for the attack. Fawzy allegedly set up a chemical fertilizer project in Meghaga, in Minya province about 100 miles south of Cairo, as a cover for the operation. Fawzi was identified as a resident of Mogattam, a suburb just east of Islamic Cairo.

B. Ashraf Sa'id Youssef (at large) (DOB 11/4/1978) is described as the individual who recruited the bomber, Bashandi, and trained him to conduct the operation. MOI asserted that Youssef knew Bashandi would die upon detonation of the bomb but told the bomber he would have five minutes to escape after triggering the device. Youssef was identified as a resident of Ezzbet Rushdi in Shubra al-Kheima, in Qalyubia province on the northern fringes of Cairo.

C. Tarek Ahmed El Sayed Ali (in custody) (DOB 8/25/1971) is described as a graduate of the faculty of sciences and identified as the one who built the bomb, in a workshop in Al-Marg, a northern Cairo suburb. Ali reportedly put the bomb in a green container and passed it to Youssef, who passed it to Bashandi. (Comment: Mention of a green container tracks with the statement of an AmCit victim, who described an approach by a man carrying a green bucket. End comment.)

D. Reda Saeed Ahmed Ibrahim (in custody) (DOB 10/18/1976) is a neighbor of Bashandi who allegedly introduced him to the group. MOI alleged that planners originally intended to use Ibrahim to deliver the bomb but that his ill health made them reconsider. (Note: We will submit these names separately for Visas Vipers consideration. End note.)

3. (SBU) The April 18 edition of Al-Ahram, Egypt's leading daily, carried interviews with family members of two of the detainees. Samar, Akram Fawzy's wife insisted that "although he prayed, fasted, and asked me to wear the niqab (face veil)" her husband did not display extremist tendencies. She said she had met her husband when he worked at her uncle's marble processing factory. Akram "even" allowed Samar to watch satellite TV and listen to the radio, she stated in the interview. Samar acknowledged that her husband had recently befriended defendant Tarek Ali. The mother and sister of Reda Ibrahim asserted to Al-Ahram that he was too ill to be involved in such a plot and that he was a good student at Cairo University's Faculty of Agriculture. They acknowledged that he had been a school friend of the bomber Bashandi.

4. (SBU) A fifth individual initially named as a suspect, Mohamed Fikry Abdel Azim El-Guindy, is a licensed gun merchant in Meghaga, Minya, who allegedly sold a gun to defendant Tarek Ali. He was arrested, but is apparently no longer considered part of the conspiracy.

Mufti Condemns Bombing

5. (SBU) Egypt's leading daily Al-Ahram published on April 16 a piece entitled "They are murdering beauty" penned by Sheikh Ali Gom'a, who, as Mufti of the Republic, is Egypt's second-ranking Islamic cleric, after the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar. Gom'a lashed out at the April 7 bombing and its perpetrators, noting the irony that it would be conducted in a historic district famous for showcasing Islam's heritage of beautiful and harmonious architecture. Gom'a said the "cowardly terrorist" who "murdered Egyptians and foreigners alike...must have never seen beauty in his heart, his eyes, or his belief." He wrote that the attack demonstrated "the ugliness of his misguided beliefs, which are against Islam," added that the attack was a negative manifestation "of the slumber that Islamic civilization is currently enduring," and opined that security forces should "strike hard with a punishment that befits the crime." He closed his piece with several Qur'anic citations supporting his argument that Islam's message is one of love and beauty rather than hatred and destruction.

Islamic Group Statement (from jail)

6. (SBU) Also on April 16, Al-Ahram carried an interview with imprisoned members of the leadership of the Islamic Group, the terrorist organization that conducted many of the terror operations that struck Egypt in the 1990s. The leaders condemned the operation, and asserted that "the era of such

operations is long gone" adding that they thought "everyone now understood their negative consequences." Such operations "only serve the goals of the enemies of the nation," they contended. (Comment: Such rhetoric is usually a reference to Israel. In this context, it does not appear to be an accusation of Israeli responsibility, although such accusations have appeared elsewhere in the Egyptian media (ref B). End comment.) In the lengthy interview, the leaders reiterate several times the "misguided beliefs" of those who carried out the attack, added that foreign tourists and business people who visit Egypt enjoy protection under Islamic law, and described the attack as "murder, not jihad."

The Public Debate: Who is to Blame?

17. (C) Much commentary about the attack in the Egyptian media has focused on the psychology of the bomber Bashandi, with speculation that poverty, and the hopelessness Egyptian youth face due to widespread unemployment, made him susceptible to extremist ideology. In one of the more outrageous pieces, the populist weekly tabloid Sawt al-Umma published on April 17 a "thoughtful" article that compared the AmCit victim to the Egyptian bomber, noting that both were religious young men, both were of modest backgrounds, "both suffered from depression" and, ultimately, both were "victims of Bush's religious wars." True to form, the reckless tabloid al-Osboa published an article citing "reports" of Israeli and U.S. involvement in the attack. Prominent columnist Salama Ahmed Salama published a piece in Ahram in which he linked extremism to a lack of political freedom and legitimate outlets for the frustrations of youth. Arguing in an opposite direction, leading commentator Abdel Moneim Said warned against seeking excuses or justifications for terrorists, whose inexcusable crimes cost all of Egypt dearly.

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GRAY